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A MANUFACTURING METHOD OF A LIQUID CRYSTAL DISPLAY DEVICE

15 [Abstract]

PROBLEM TO BE SOLVED: To provide a method for manufacturing a liquid crystal display device in which irregularity in display can be suppressed and uniformity in display can be improved.

SOLUTION: In the method for manufacturing a liquid crystal display device, a sealing material is applied to form a sealing part on the edge part of at least one substrate of a pair of substrates having electrode layers subjected to alignment treatment, a specified amount of a liquid crystal is dropped onto the region inside of the sealing part of the substrate which a spacer material is fixed on the other substrate, the substrates are laminated and the sealing

material is hardened to produce a panel. In this method, at least one of the pair of substrates is housed in a vacuum chamber and the chamber is evacuated to remove unnecessary substances depositing on the substrate before both substrates are laminated.

[Claim(s)]

[Claim 1] A method for manufacturing a liquid crystal display device, wherein a seal portion is formed by coating a seal member on a periphery of at least one substrate of a pair of substrates having an electrode to which an orientation process is applied, a predetermined amount of liquid crystal is dropped into an inside of the seal member of the substrate, a spacer member is adhered on one substrate, and a panel is formed by attaching the substrates, and curing the seal member is characterized in that at least any one of the pair of substrates is provided into a vacuum container before attaching the substrates, and unnecessary attachment attached on the substrate is eliminated by reducing a pressure in the vacuum container.

[Claim 2] The method of manufacturing a liquid crystal display device of Claim 1, wherein the substrate on which the seal member is coated is provided into a vacuum container before dropping the liquid crystal, and then the pressure is reduced.

[Claim 3] The method of manufacturing a liquid crystal display device of Claim 1 or 2, wherein the substrate on which the spacer is attached is provided into a vacuum container, and then the pressure is reduced.

**[Claim 4] The method of manufacturing a liquid crystal display device of
any one of Claim 1 to 3, wherein the pressure of vacuum container is reduced
to below 133.3 Pa.**

[Title of the Invention]

A MANUFACTURING METHOD OF A LIQUID CRYSTAL DISPLAY DEVICE

[Detailed Description of the Invention]

[Field of the Invention]

5 The present invention relates to a manufacturing method of a liquid crystal display device which have excellent properties in terms of reliability and uniformity of an device.

[Description of the Prior Art]

An LCD device is a display device which changes an initial orientation
10 direction of an liquid crystal into other orientation state by a process using
anisotropy of an liquid crystal, and uses a change of an optical property
related to the direction change. Compared with a conventional display
device, a light-weighted and thin display device which can be driven at a low
voltage, is suitable for LSI driving, and consumes low power is being
15 developed. Development of a product which can be mounted on OA, and VA
devices is being progressed as a big-sized screen, and a large-capacity are
required recently.

Presently, STN display of a simple matrix type, or TFT display of active matrix type using the change of a layout state of an liquid crystal due to an application of an electromagnetic field, that is, an optical property are being mounted on each product according to each characteristics.

5 An LCD device had a sandwiched structure in which an liquid crystal is injected between two glass substrates on which the transparent electrode layers are formed. An orientation layer for orientating an liquid crystal is formed on the transparent electrode. For example, in STN method, the thickness of a cell between the substrates is 5-7 micro meter, an orientation
10 of an liquid crystal is controlled by an orientation layer so that a pre-tilt angle of 3 - 8 degree is obtained. According to STN method, it is possible to obtain a transmissivity property for a voltage showing a sharp change by changing an orientation direction of an liquid crystal into 180 - 270 degree between two substrates. Because of it, a precise control of a cell thickness
15 is necessary and the precision of a cell thickness of 0.05 - 0.1 micro meter is required in order to suppress a display smear created due to imbalance of a threshold voltage.

Below, a conventional manufacturing method of an liquid crystal display device using a dropping process will be explained with referring to a

STN method. First of all, a glass substrate having a transparent electrode such as ITO on one peripheral side is washed, and then, for example, a coating liquid including a heat-resistant polyimide is printed and coated on a electrode layer. An orientation layer is formed by removing a solvent, 5 polymerizing and curing. Next, a rubbing process of the orientation layer is performed.

And, a seal member of an ultraviolet curing type is printed and coated on a peripheral side of a substrate. a granular spacer member is distributed on one substrate, and is adhered on the substrate after a heating process is 10 applied. At this time, in order to control a cell thickness to be uniform, a spacer member in which uniformity of a diameter of a particle is very excellent is used. Next, after dropping a necessary amount of an liquid crystal into the inner side of the seal member of the printed substrate by using an liquid injection device, this substrate, and a substrate on which a 15 granular spacer is attached are bonded by using an alignment device.

Further, in order to prevent an ultraviolet ray deterioration of an liquid crystal, a display portion is covered by a mask, and a seal member is cured by illuminating an ultraviolet rays only on the seal member. Subsequently, an orientation of an liquid crystal is stabilized by a heating process. Then,

an LCD device is formed by attaching a polarization plate.

In a dropping method, since a necessary amount of an liquid crystal is dropped directly on a substrate by an liquid injection device, the injection time is reduced remarkably, and it is possible to maintain the injection time 5 constantly regardless of a panel size. Further, it has a characteristics to cope with the linearization easily.

[Problem(s) to be Solved by the Invention]

But, according to a conventional manufacturing method, it may not possible to control uniformity of a cell thickness sufficiently.

10 Therefore, a manufacturing method for controlling the cell thickness uniformly is required.

[Means for Solving the Problem]

In order to solve the above-mentioned problems, a manufacturing method of an liquid crystal display device according to the present invention 15 is a method in which a seal portion is formed by coating a seal member on a periphery of at least one substrate of a pair of substrates having an electrode to which an orientation process is applied, a predetermined amount of liquid crystal is dropped into an inside of the seal member of the substrate, a

spacer member is adhered on one substrate, and a panel is formed by attaching the substrates, and curing the seal member, and is characterized in that at least any one of the pair of substrates is accommodated into a vacuum container before attaching the substrates, and unnecessary attachment attached on the substrate is eliminated by reducing a pressure in the vacuum container.

According to the present invention, unnecessary attachment on the substrate into which is introduced and attached during a manufacturing process is eliminated by accommodating at least any one of the pair of substrates into a vacuum container before attaching the substrates, and by reducing a pressure in the vacuum container. Therefore, under the state that unnecessary attachment attached on the substrate is eliminated, it is possible to bond the substrates. Accordingly, an uniform cell thickness can be formed, and non-uniformity of a pre-tilt angle is suppressed. Thereby, uniformity of display is improved by preventing display smears. At this time, unnecessary attachment may be a dust or water which is introduced during a manufacturing process, an impurities included into the orientation layer, and a spacer member which has a feeble attachment on a substrate.

Further, it is preferable that the substrate on which a seal member is

coated is accommodated into a vacuum container before dropping the liquid crystal, and then the pressure is reduced. After dropping on the substrate, it is difficult to eliminate unnecessary attachment since dust, water, and impurities attached on the substrate are covered by an liquid crystal. But, 5 unnecessary attachment such as dust, water, and impurities can be eliminated by maintaining the substrate on which a seal member is coated, under the reduced pressure before dropping the liquid crystal.

Further, it is preferable that a substrate on which the spacer member is adhered is accommodated into a vacuum container, and then the pressure 10 is reduced. The spacer member adhered on the substrate has a different attachment power according to the particle shape, or a diameter of a particle. A spacer having a weak attachment can be moved easily when dropped liquid crystal is diffused into the cell, and this is a reason why a cell thickness becomes non-uniform. Therefore, a spacer having a weak attachment is 15 eliminated before attaching the substrates by maintaining a substrate on which the spacer member is adhered under the reduced pressure. Therefore, it is possible make the cell thickness be more uniform.

Further, it is preferable that the pressure of vacuum container is reduced to below 133.3 Pa. It is possible to eliminate unnecessary

attachment within a short time by maintaining a substrate to a pressure below 133.3 Pa.

[Embodiment of the Invention]

Below, an embodiment of the present invention will be explained with
5 referring to the drawings.

First Embodiment

FIG. 1 shows a flow chart of a manufacturing process of a manufacturing method of an liquid crystal display device according to an embodiment of the present invention. First of all, in a process for washing a 10 substrate, in a process for washing a substrate, a glass substrate having a transparent electrode such as ITO on one peripheral side is washed, and then, in a process for printing an orientation layer, for example, a coating liquid including a heat-resistant polyimide is printed and coated on a electrode layer. In a provisional curing process, a solvent is eliminated, and a 15 provisional curing is performed. In a curing process, an orientation layer is formed by polymerizing. Next, in a rubbing process, a rubbing process of the orientation layer is performed. Then, in a process for washing a substrate, the substrate to which rubbing is applied is washed.

Next, in a seal printing process, a seal portion is formed by printing

and coating a seal member of an ultraviolet rays curing type on a periphery of one substrate. Further, in a process for reducing a pressure, the substrate having the seal portion is accommodated into a vacuum container such as a glove box, and a pressure-reduction is performed. The substrate is
5 maintained at a predetermined pressure, and for a predetermined time. Next, after an atmosphere pressure is provided, in a process for dropping an liquid crystal, a necessary amount of an liquid crystal is dropped into the inner side of the seal portion of the substrate by using an liquid injection device.

On the other hand, in a spacer distribution process, granular spacers
10 are distributed on one substrate, and then in a spacer adhering process, the spacers are adhered on the substrate by a heating process. Further, in a process for reducing a pressure, the substrate on which the spacer member is attached is accommodated into a vacuum container such as a glove box, and a pressure-reduction is performed. The substrate is maintained at a
15 predetermined pressure, and for a predetermined time. Next, after an atmosphere pressure is provided, in a attaching process, this substrate, and a substrate on which a granular spacer is attached are bonded by using an alignment device.

Further, in a seal curing process, in order to prevent an ultraviolet ray

deterioration of an liquid crystal, a display portion is covered by a mask, and a seal portion is cured by illuminating an ultraviolet rays only on the seal portion. Subsequently, an LCD device is formed by a heating process, and an attachment process of a polarization plate.

5 FIG. 2 shows a structure of an LCD device produced as described above. An LCD device A is composed of an liquid crystal 10 maintained in a predetermined gap which is set to a thickness of a segment glass substrate 1, a common glass substrate 2, a spacer member 9 in a panel surface, and a seal member into which the spacer member 8 is inserted. A color filter 7
10 including fine dots of RGB, a common electrode 6, and a polyimide orientation layer 4 are formed sequentially on an inside surface of the common glass substrate 2. Further, a segment electrode 5, and a polyimide orientation layer 3 are formed sequentially on an inside surface of the common glass substrate 2.

15 According to the embodiment of the present invention, a substrate on which the seal member is coated is accommodated into a vacuum container, before dropping the liquid crystal, and then the pressure is reduced. Then, the substrate is maintained at a predetermined pressure, and for a predetermined time. Therefore, unnecessary attachment of the substrate

such as dust, water, and impurities can be eliminated. Since dust, water, and impurities do not exist on the substrate, uniformity of a cell thickness can be improved. Further, non-uniformity of a pre-tilt angle is suppressed. the spacers having a weak attachment on the substrate can be eliminated by 5 scattering. Therefore, it is possible to control movement of the spacers due to flow of an liquid crystal sealed between the substrates, and to improve uniformity of a cell thickness.

At this time, it is preferable that the reduced pressure is set to below 133.3 Pa. It is more preferable that the reduced pressure is set to below 10 133.3 Pa, and above 66.6 Pa. The reason is as follows. In case of above 133.3 Pa, it take a long time to eliminate unnecessary attachment. Further, it is possible to eliminate unnecessary attachment sufficiently at above 66.6 Pa.

Further, after maintaining the substrate under the reduced pressure, it 15 is preferable that the time until an liquid crystal is dropped is set to be short. In case that the pressure is set to below 133.3 Pa, the preferable time is set to within 5 minute, and more preferable time is set to within 2 minute. By shortening the time until an liquid crystal is dropped, it is possible to control the amount of dust or water attached on the substrate as the time passes by.

According to the present embodiment, an example in which the substrate on which a seal member is coated, and the substrate on which a spacer is distributed are maintained under the reduced pressure is enumerated. But it is preferable that the substrates are maintained under
5 the reduced pressure even after the orientation process. The reason is as follows. Even when there are parts which do not contact the liquid crystal, the dust introduced into the orientation layer is exposed to the inside surface, and is contacted to the liquid crystal.

Below, the present invention will be explained in detail by taking an
10 example.

(Example 1)

A glass substrate(300mm×400mm) having ITO electrode layer to which an orientation process is applied is prepared. The glass substrate having the seal portion formed by coating a seal member is accommodated into a
15 glove box. The pressure of the glove box is reduced, and the glass substrate is maintained at the pressure ranging from 533.2 Pa to 66.6 Pa for 30 seconds or 90 seconds. Then, after an atmosphere pressure is provided, after 2 minutes, an liquid crystal is dropped into the inner side of the seal portion. The glass substrate on which a spacer is attached is maintained at

the pressure which is same to that of the glass substrate on which the seal member is coated, for 30 seconds or 90 seconds. Then, the glass substrate on which spacers are distributed are arranged at the atmosphere. After 2 minutes, two substrates are bonded, and an LCD device(NO. 1-6) having a

5 structure described in FIG. 2 are manufactured.

In connection with the manufactured display device, a difference of a panel transmissivity is measured when a duty driving of 1/300, and a multiplex driving of 100Hz are performed. To be more specific, the difference between the transmissivity of the portion which are not contacted to the

10 liquid crystal in case of bonding, and transmissivity of a panel when being fixed to a driving voltage reaching to 50% of maximum transmissivity of a static driving is measured. In FIG. 3, the relationships between the difference of a panel transmissivity of an LCD device manufactured after being maintained at the predetermined for 30 seconds or 90 seconds, and

15 maintenance pressure are shown.

From this relationships, it is to be understood that a transmissivity difference can be reduced by maintaining the substrate under the reduced pressure. Especially, it is also to be understood that a transmissivity difference can be almost eliminated and display smears can be suppressed

by maintaining the substrate at below 133.3 Pa for 90 seconds.

Further, at the same time as when the substrate on which a spacer member is attached is maintained at the reduced pressure, the change of the number of the spacer members was observed by a microscope. In FIG. 4,

5 the relationships between a maintenance pressure and a remaining rate of the spacers are shown.

From this, it is to be understood that the spacer having a weak attachment on the substrate is eliminated by maintaining the substrate on which a spacer member is attached at the reduced pressure.

10 [Effect of the Invention]

As explained above, in a manufacturing method of an liquid crystal display device according to the present invention, at least one substrate of a pair of substrates having an electrode to which an orientation process is applied is maintained at the reduced pressure before attaching the substrates.

15 Therefore, unnecessary attachment attached on the substrate is eliminated, thereby improving uniformity of a cell thickness. Accordingly, display smears can be prevented and a manufacturing method of an liquid crystal display device in which uniformity of a cell thickness is improved is provided.

Further, according to a manufacturing method of the present invention,

the substrate on which a seal member is coated is maintained at the reduced pressure before dropping an liquid crystal. Therefore, unnecessary attachment such as dust, water, and impurities can be eliminated easily, thereby improving uniformity of a cell thickness.

5 Further, according to a manufacturing method of the present invention, the substrate on which a spacer member is attached is maintained at the reduced pressure. the spacer member having a weak attachment is eliminated before attaching the substrates, thereby improving uniformity of a cell thickness.

10 Further, according to a manufacturing method of the present invention, the substrate is maintained at the reduced pressure which is below 133.3 Pa. Therefore, unnecessary attachment such as dust, water, and impurities can be eliminated within a short time, thereby reducing the manufacturing time of an LCD device.

[Description of Drawings]

FIG. 1 shows a flow chart of a manufacturing process of a manufacturing method according to the first embodiment of the present invention.

5 **FIG. 2 shows a structure of an LCD device obtained by a manufacturing method according to the first embodiment of the present invention.**

10 **FIG. 3 is a diagram showing the relationships between the difference of a panel transmissivity, and a maintenance pressure in the example of the present invention.**

FIG. 4 is a diagram showing the relationships between a maintenance pressure and a remaining rate of the spacers in the example of the present invention.

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【特許請求の範囲】

【請求項1】 配向処理された電極層を有する一対の基板の少なくとも一方の基板の周縁部にシール材を塗布してシール部となし、該基板のシール部の内側に所定量の液晶を滴下し、他方の基板上にはスペーサ材を固定させ、基板同士を貼り合わせ、シール材を硬化させてパネルとなす液晶表示素子の製造方法において、

前記一対の基板の少なくともいずれかを、基板同士を貼り合わせる前に真空容器に収容し、該真空容器を減圧して基板に付着した不用付着物を除去することを特徴とする液晶表示素子の製造方法。

【請求項2】 前記シール材を塗布した基板を、液晶を滴下する前に真空容器に収容して減圧することを特徴とする請求項1記載の製造方法。

【請求項3】 前記スペーサ材を固定させた基板を、真空容器に収容して減圧することを特徴とする請求項1又は2に記載の製造方法。

【請求項4】 前記真空容器を133.3Pa以下に減圧することを特徴とする請求項1～3のいずれか一つに記載の製造方法。

【発明の詳細な説明】

【0001】

【発明の属する技術分野】本発明は、表示の均一性及び素子の信頼性について良好な特性を示す液晶表示素子の製造方法に関する。

【0002】

【従来の技術】液晶表示素子は、液晶の初期配向方位を液晶の異方性を利用した作用により他の配向状態に変化させ、それに伴う光学的特性の変化を利用した表示素子である。従来の表示素子に比べ低電圧駆動が可能であり、LSI駆動に適すること、低電力消費タイプであること、薄型、軽量化が可能であること等から、近年大画面化、大容量化によりOA、AV機器への搭載を目指し開発が進められ、現在、液晶の電場印加による配列状態の変化、即ち電気光学特性を利用した単純マトリックス方式のSTNディスプレイやアクティブマトリックス方式のTFTディスプレイが各々の特徴に合わせて各商品に搭載されている。

【0003】液晶表示素子は透明電極膜を形成した2枚のガラス基板間に液晶を挟んだサンドイッチ構造であり、透明電極上には液晶を配向させるための配向膜を有している。例えば、STN方式では、基板間のセル厚は5～7μmであり、3～8度のプレチルト角が得られるように配向膜により液晶の配向が制御されている。STN方式では、2枚の基板間で液晶の配向方向を180～270度捻ることにより急峻な電圧対透過率特性を得ることを可能としている。そのため、セル厚の正確な制御が必要とされ、しきい値電圧のバラツキによる表示ムラを抑制するには、0.05～0.1μmのセル厚精度が要求されている。

【0004】以下、STN方式の場合を例にとり、滴下工法を用いた従来の液晶表示素子の製造方法について説明する。まず、一平面にITO等の透明電極膜を有するガラス基板を洗浄する。次に、例えば熱硬化性ポリイミドを含む塗液を電極膜に印刷塗布し、溶媒を除去後重合硬化させて配向膜を形成する。次に、配向膜のラビング処理を行なう。

【0005】そして、一方の基板の周縁部に紫外線硬化型のシール材を印刷塗布する。他方の基板には粒状のスペーサ材を散布し、熱処理を行なってスペーサ材を基板に固定させる。ここで、セル厚を均一に制御するため、粒子径の均一性が良好なスペーサ材が用いられる。次いで、シール材を印刷した基板のシール材の内側に液体吐出装置を用いて必要量だけ液晶を滴下した後、この基板と粒状のスペーサ材を固定させた基板とアライメント装置を用いて貼り合わせる。

【0006】そして、液晶の紫外線劣化を防止するため、表示部をマスクで隠して、シール部分にのみ紫外線照射を行なってシール材を硬化させる。次いで、熱処理して液晶の配向を安定化させる。その後、基板の両外面に偏光板を張り付けることにより、液晶表示素子が作製される。

【0007】滴下工法では、液体吐出装置により直接基板上に液晶を必要量だけ供給するので、注入時間を大幅に短縮、かつパネルサイズに関わらず注入時間を一定に保つことが可能であり、ライン化への対応が容易であるといった特徴がある。

【0008】

【発明が解決しようとする課題】しかしながら、従来の製造方法では、セル厚の均一性が必ずしも十分に制御されているとは言えず、セル厚をより均一に制御可能な製造方法が必要とされている。

【0009】そこで、本発明は、表示ムラを抑制し表示の均一性を向上させることの可能な液晶表示素子の製造方法を提供することを目的とした。

【0010】

【課題を解決するための手段】上記課題を解決するため、本発明の液晶表示素子の製造方法は、配向処理された電極層を有する一対の基板の少なくとも一方の基板の周縁部にシール材を塗布してシール部となし、該基板のシール部の内側に所定量の液晶を滴下し、他方の基板上にはスペーサ材を固定させ、基板同士を貼り合わせ、シール材を硬化させてパネルとなす液晶表示素子の製造方法において、前記一対の基板の少なくともいずれかを、基板同士を貼り合わせる前に真空容器に収容し、該真空容器を減圧して基板に付着した不用付着物を除去することを特徴とする。

【0011】本発明によれば、基板同士を張り合わせる前に、一対の基板の少なくともいずれかを真空容器に収容し、真空容器を減圧することにより製造工程中に混入

し基板に付着した不用付着物を除去できる。これにより、不用付着物が除去された状態で基板同士を張り合わせることができる。したがって、セル厚をより均一にでき、かつ、プレチルト角のばらつきを抑制できるので、表示ムラを防止し表示の均一性を向上させることが可能となる。ここで、不用付着物には、製造工程中に混入する塵や水分、配向膜等に含まれる不純物、そして、基板に対する固着力の弱いスペーサ材等が含まれる。

【0012】また、前記シール材を塗布した基板を、液晶を滴下する前に真空容器に収容して減圧することが好ましい。液晶を基板に滴下した後では、基板に付着した塵、水分、そして不純物が液晶に覆われるので除去されにくくなる。しかしながら、液晶を基板に滴下する前にシール材を塗布した基板を減圧下に保持することにより、容易に塵や水分、そして不純物を除去できる。

【0013】また、前記スペーサ材を固定させた基板を、真空容器に収容して減圧することが好ましい。基板に固定されたスペーサは、その粒子形状や粒子径により基板に対する固着力が異なる。固着力の弱いスペーサは、滴下された液晶がセル内に広がる際に容易に移動して、セル厚を不均一にする原因となる。そこで、スペーサ材を固定させた基板を減圧下に保持することにより、基板同士を張り合わせる前に固着力の弱いスペーサを予め除去する。これにより、セル厚をより均一にすることが可能となる。

【0014】また、前記真空容器を133.3Pa以下に減圧することが好ましい。133.3Pa以下の圧力下に基板を保持することにより、より短時間で不用付着物を除去することができる。

【0015】

【発明の実施の形態】以下、図面を用いて、本発明に係る実施の形態について説明する。

実施の形態1、図1は、本実施の形態に係る液晶表示素子の製造方法における製造工程を示す流れ図である。まず、基板洗浄工程において、一主面にITO等の透明電極膜を有するガラス基板を洗浄する。次に、配向膜印刷工程において、例えば熱硬化性ポリイミドを含む塗液を電極膜に印刷塗布し、仮硬化工程において溶媒を除去し仮硬化させ、本硬化工程において重合させて配向膜を形成する。次に、ラビング工程において配向膜のラビング処理を行ない、この後、基板洗浄工程においてラビング処理した基板を洗浄する。

【0016】次いで、シール印刷工程において、一方の基板の周縁部に紫外線硬化型のシール材を印刷塗布してシール部を形成する。そして、減圧工程において、シール部を形成した基板をグローブボックス等の真空容器に入れ減圧して、所定圧力下で所定時間保持する。次いで、大気圧に戻した後、液晶滴下工程において、この基板上のシール部の内側に液体吐出装置を用いて必要量だけ液晶を滴下する。

【0017】一方、スペーサ散布工程において、他方の基板には粒状のスペーサ材を散布し、次いで、スペーサ固定工程において、熱処理してスペーサ材を基板に固定させる。そして、減圧工程において、スペーサ材を固定させた基板をグローブボックス等の真空容器に入れ減圧して、所定圧力下で所定時間保持する。次いで、大気圧に戻した後、基板貼り合わせ工程において、この基板と液晶を滴下した基板とをアライメント装置を用いて貼り合わせる。

【0018】次に、シール硬化工程において、液晶の紫外線劣化を防止するため、表示部をマスクで隠して、シール部にのみ紫外線照射を行ってシール部を硬化させる。そして、熱処理工程、偏光板貼り付け工程を経て液晶表示素子が作製される。

【0019】図2は、上記の方法を用いて作製した液晶表示素子の構造を示す模式断面図である。液晶表示素子Aは、セグメントガラス基板1及びコモンガラス基板2と、パネル面内スペーサ材9ヒスペーサ材入りシール材8の厚さで規定される所定の間際に保持された液晶10と、基板の両外面に張り付けられた偏光板11,12とから成る。さらに、コモンガラス基板2の内面にはRGBの微細な短冊状のドットから成るカラーフィルタ7、コモン電極6、そしてポリイミド配向膜4が順次形成されている。また、セグメントガラス基板1の内面には、セグメント電極5、そしてポリイミド配向膜3が順次形成されている。

【0020】本実施の形態によれば、液晶を滴下する前に、シール材を塗布した基板を真空容器に収容し、真空容器を減圧して所定圧力下で所定時間保持することにより、基板に付着した塵や水分、そして不純物を容易に除去することができる。基板上に塵や水分、そして不純物が存在しないので、セル厚を均一性を向上させることができる。また、プレチルト角のばらつきを抑制する効果も有する。さらに、スペーサ材を散布した基板を減圧下で所定時間保持することにより、基板に対する固着力の弱いスペーサを飛散させて除去することができるので、基板間に封入された液晶の流動に伴うスペーサの移動を抑制でき、セル厚の均一性を向上させることができる。

【0021】ここで、減圧時の圧力は、133.3Pa以下が好ましく、より好ましくは133.3Pa以下で66.6Pa以上である。133.3Pa以上では不用付着物を除去するのに長時間を要する。また、基板に付着した不用付着物は66.6Pa以上で十分に除去できるからである。

【0022】また、基板を減圧下に保持後、液晶を滴下するまでの時間は短い方が好ましい。133.3Pa以下の圧力に保持した場合、好ましくは5分以内、より好ましくは2分以内である。液晶を滴下するまでの時間を短くすることにより、経時に基板上に付着する塵や水分の量を抑制できるからである。

【0023】本実施の形態では、シール材を塗布した基板及びスペーサを散布した基板を減圧下に保持する例を示したが、さらに、配向処理後にも減圧下に保持することが好ましい。液晶と接触しない部分であっても、配向膜に取りこまれた塵が基板内面に表出して液晶と接触する場合があるからである。

【0024】

【実施例】以下、実施例を用いて、本発明をより詳細に説明する。

(実施例1) 配向処理したITO電極膜を有するガラス基板(300mm×400mm)を用いて、シール材を塗布してシール部を形成したガラス基板をグローブボックスに収容し、グローブボックスを減圧して、ガラス基板を533.2~66.6Paの範囲の圧力下に30秒又は90秒保持後、大気圧下に戻して2分後にシール部の内側に液晶を滴下した。さらに、スペーサ材を固着させたガラス基板もシール材を塗布したガラス基板と同じ圧力下に30秒又は90秒保持した。そして、スペーサ材を散布したガラス基板を大気圧下に戻して2分後、2枚のガラス基板を貼り合わせて図2に示した構造を有する液晶表示素子(No.1~6)を作製した。

【0025】作製した表示素子について、1/300デューティー駆動、100Hzのマルチフレックス駆動を行ったときのパネル透過率差を測定した。具体的には、貼り合わせ時に液晶に接していない部分の透過率が、スタティック駆動での最大透過率の50%に達する駆動電圧に固定したときのパネル透過率差を測定した。所定圧力に30秒又は90秒保持して作製した液晶表示素子のパネル透過率差と保持圧力との関係を図3に示す。

【0026】これより、基板を減圧下に保持することにより透過率差を減少させることができることがわかった。特に、133.3Pa以下の圧力に90秒程度保持することにより、透過率差をほぼなくすことができ表示ムラを抑制できることがわかった。

【0027】また、スペーサ材を固着させたガラス基板を、減圧下に保持した時の同一ポイントにおけるスペーサ材の個数の変化を顕微鏡観察により調べた。保持圧力とスペーサ材の残存率との関係を図4に示す。

【0028】これにより、スペーサ材を固着させた基板を減圧下に保持することにより、基板に対する固着力の

弱いスペーサ材を除去できることができることがわかった。

【0029】

【発明の効果】以上述べたように、本発明の液晶表示素子の製造方法は、配向処理された電極膜を有する一対の基板の少なくともいずれかの基板を、基板同士を貼り合わせる前に減圧下に保持するようにしたので、基板に付着した不用付着物を除去することができ、セル厚の均一性を向上させることができる。したがって、表示ムラを防止し表示の均一性を向上させた液晶表示素子の製造方法を提供できる。

【0030】また、本発明の製造方法は、液晶を滴下する前に、シール材を塗布した基板を減圧下に保持するようにしたので、基板に付着した塵、水分、そして不純物を容易に除去でき、セル厚の均一性をより向上させることができる。

【0031】また、本発明の製造方法は、スペーサ材を固着させた基板を減圧下に保持するようにしたので、固着力の弱いスペーサを基板同士を貼り合わせる前に予め除去することができ、セル厚の均一性をより向上させることができる。

【0032】また、本発明の製造方法は、133.3Pa以下の減圧下に基板を保持するようにしたので、より短時間で不用付着物を除去することができ、液晶表示素子の作製時間をより低減することができる。

【図面の簡単な説明】

【図1】 本発明の実施の形態1に係る製造方法の工程を示す流れ図。

【図2】 本発明の実施の形態1に係る製造方法により得られた液晶表示素子の構造を示す模式断面図。

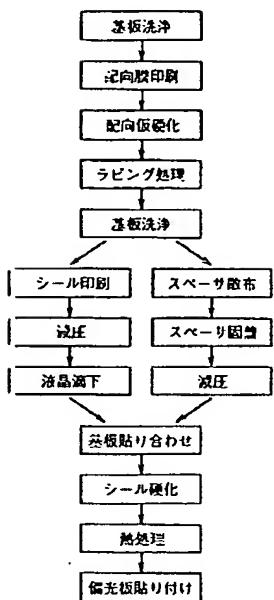
【図3】 本発明の実施例における保持圧力とパネル透過率差との関係を示す図。

【図4】 本発明の実施例における保持圧力とスペーサ残存率との関係を示す図。

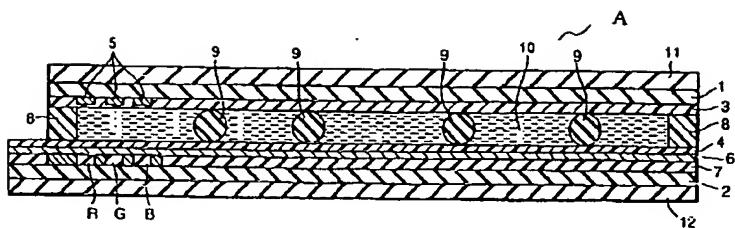
【符号の説明】

- 1 セグメントガラス基板、2 コモンガラス基板、3,4 ポリイミド配向膜、5 セグメント電極、6 コモン電極、7 カラーフィルタ、8 スペーサー入りシール剤、9 パネル面内スペーサ材、10 液晶、11,12 偏光板、A 液晶表示素子。

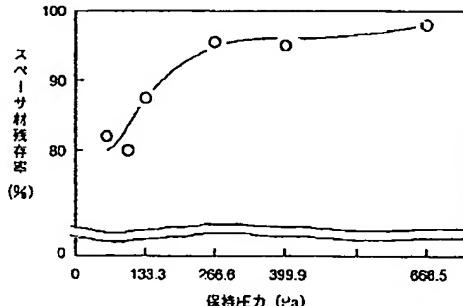
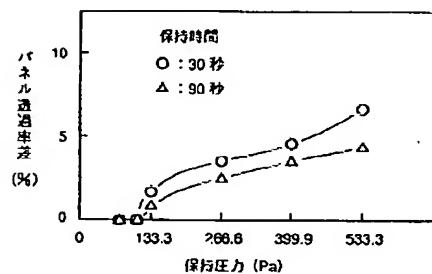
【図1】



【図2】



【図3】



フロントページの続き

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